



June 18, 2021

Dear SMCPs Families:

As we conclude this school year, we are so appreciative of the patience and flexibility of our students and families. Whether students were learning virtually or in person, instruction took on a new look this year. Together, we learned to adjust how we worked together and learned together, and we have made it to the other side.

On Tuesday afternoon, Governor Hogan stated that “we have finally reached the light at the end of that long tunnel” as he announced the end of the COVID-19 State of Emergency. This announcement sunsets executive orders requiring face coverings, social distancing requirements, and group gathering limitations. To that end, St. Mary's County Public Schools will begin this summer with normal operations. Keeping a focus on clean and healthy environments, hand sanitizer will still be plentiful and hand washing is encouraged; however, staff, students, and visitors will not be required to wear masks. Those who wish to wear masks are welcome to do so, and disposable masks will be available.

This summer, a number of programs are happening involving students and staff. This includes the summer recovery program, summer enrichment camps, and summer learning programs for our students. In these summer programs, mask and social distancing restrictions will be lifted. For students in the programs, this may be the first time for students and staff to see each other's smiles in over a year. This will be exciting for many, while others may be nervous or anxious about the return to normal operations. Our focus will be on creating welcoming and understanding environments to help everyone through this transition. Caring comes before content.

When we begin the 2021-2022 school year, we will return with a normal schedule with in-person instruction each day. We look forward to seeing our students in hallways, classrooms, and cafeterias, and on our fields or stages.

SMCPs will also be offering a fully virtual learning program for grades 3-12 next year. For more information about this program visit our website at <https://schools.smcps.org/virtual>. This site includes information about the Virtual Academy as well as information for those who may be interested in enrolling.

Best wishes for a great summer and we look forward to the enthusiastic voices of our students and the energy of learning together this fall.

With best wishes,

J. Scott Smith, Ed.D.
Superintendent